

Join Mark Carwardine on a once-in-a-lifetime whale watching trip to the Antarctic Peninsula with Cheesemans' Ecology Safaris

20 February - 9 March 2023



"This is an incredibly exciting time to visit the Antarctic Peninsula, for two fantastic reasons: whales and light. From spectacular numbers of humpbacks gorging on krill to inquisitive Antarctic minke whales and pods of hunting killer whales, the Peninsula is alive with whales in late February and early March. This is also the best time of year for the warm, golden light - perfect for photography against such a spectacular wilderness backdrop and the perfect way to begin and end each day. And, of course, there will be loads of other wildlife, from penguins to seals, visits to historical sites, and much more." Mark Carwardine

Mark is delighted to be joining forces with Cheesemans' Ecology Safaris – a long-established and highly reputable wildlife travel Californian company, renowned for its conservation values – for this wonderful expedition cruise. Mark has worked closely with them to create the perfect itinerary for the most spectacular whale watching and to get the best encounters with all the other wildlife the Antarctic Peninsula has to offer.

HIGHLIGHTS

- Travel on our exclusively chartered, comfortable and safe, ice-strengthened polar expedition ship – the m/v *Plancius*.
- With only 100 participants, everyone can land at once (this is the maximum number allowed to land together) which gives us maximum time ashore.
- Exciting cruises in inflatable Zodiacs during the peak season specifically to see large groups of feeding and inquisitive whales.
- Wonderfully varied Antarctic journey with superb wildlife watching in a spectacular setting of ice-choked waterways, glaciers, blue and white icebergs and rugged mountains.
- Experience some of the most dramatic sunrises and sunsets on Earth, bathing the utterly breathtaking wilderness landscapes in warm hues.
- Cetacean species likely, include: humpback, fin, sei, Antarctic minke and killer whales, as well as hourglass and Peale's dolphins (previous trips Mark has led have also seen southern rightwhale dolphins, southern right whales, long-finned pilot whales, southern bottlenose whales and even Cuvier's beaked whales).
- Fabulous close encounters with Weddell, crabeater, leopard, southern elephant and Antarctic fur seals, as well as rookeries of Adélie, gentoo and chinstrap penguins. This is a great time to watch penguin chicks chasing their parents for food and cautiously learning how to swim.
- Outstanding schedule of lectures, talks, workshops and seminars from our 15 leaders – including Mark – who are marine scientists, polar historians and geologists, photographers and naturalists.





MAR 8: Bid farewell to the staff and crew of the *Plancius* and, after breakfast, disembark in Ushuaia and fly home.

MAR 9: Arrive home.

Please note: this tour is highly weather-, sea- and ice-dependent. Although we will stick to the itinerary as closely as possible, it may change to make the most of local conditions. It's part of the fun of polar exploration!

SHIP & ACCOMMODATION DETAILS

Built in 1976, the *Plancius* was designed as an oceanographic research vessel for the Royal Dutch Navy (it still flies the Dutch flag). It was purchased by Oceanwide Expeditions in 2004 and completely refurbished for passengers in 2009. It is absolutely perfect for small-ship wildlife expedition cruising - modern, comfortable (though not luxurious), ice-strengthened and quiet (equipped with a diesel-electric propulsion system which reduces the noise and vibration considerably). It also has large open deck spaces (you can walk all the way round) providing excellent opportunities to enjoy the scenery and wildlife. While inside, there are also fabulous views from the restaurant/lecture room and the spacious observation lounge (complete with bar and large windows offering full panoramic views).

The *Plancius* carries a maximum of 116 guests in 53 cabins (but we are taking just 100, plus staff) and manned by an international crew of 37 (18 nautical and 19 hotel). All passenger cabins have a private toilet and shower. They consist of: 4 quadruple cabins, 2 triple cabins, 9 twin porthole cabins, 26 twin window cabins, 2 twin deluxe cabins and 10 superior cabins. All offer lower berths (one double bed in the superior cabins and two single beds in the twin cabins), except for

ITINERARY

FEB 20: Travel to Ushuaia, Argentina.

FEB 21: Arrive in the southernmost city in the world – Ushuaia, in Argentina's Tierra del Fuego – nestled between the spectacular snow-capped mountains of the Andes and the famous Beagle Channel. Time to explore before our welcome reception. Overnight in comfortable hotel.

FEB 22: Morning in Tierra del Fuego National Park. Embark on the *Plancius*.

FEB 23-24: At sea, crossing the Drake Passage and watching for whales, dolphins, albatrosses and other wildlife. (For anyone concerned about the infamous Drake, Mark has made this crossing about 60 times so far: one crossing was very bad, a few have been rough enough to make quite a few passengers feel sick, many have been with a swell but perfectly comfortable, and quite a few have been glassy calm.)

FEB 25 - MAR 5: Nine full days of landings and Zodiac cruising along the western Antarctic Peninsula and South Shetland Islands.

MAR 6-7: Heading north north back across the Drake Passage, watching for whales, dolphins, albatrosses and other wildlife, before rounding the famous Cape Horn and sailing back up the Beagle Channel.





CABIN TYPES & PRICES PER PERSON excluding flights

Quadruple (4 available): 2 upper and 2 lower twin-sized beds, one porthole, and private bath. Deck 2. **\$13,450 | \$12,450**

Triple (2 available): 1 upper and 2 lower twin-sized beds, 1 porthole, and private bath. Deck 2. **\$15,450 | \$14,450**

Twin Porthole (9 available): 2 lower twin-sized beds, 1 porthole, and private bath. Deck 3. **\$16,895 | \$15,895**

Twin Window (26 available): 2 lower twin-sized beds, 1 window, and private bath. Deck 4. **\$17,895 | \$16,895**

Twin Deluxe (2 available): 2 lower twin-sized beds, 2 windows, and private bath. Deck 4. **\$19,450 | \$18,450**

Superior (10 available): 1 double-sized bed, 2 windows, sofa bed, refrigerator, and private bath. Decks 4, 5, and 6. **\$21,450 | \$20,450**

If space is available, some cabins can be booked as a single by adding 70% over the listed cabin cost.

Click [here](#) to see *Plancius's* deck plan and photos of her cabins.



the 4 quadruple cabins (two upper and two lower berths) and 2 triple cabins (one upper and two lower berths).

There are 10 Mark V Zodiacs on board, with 60 HP 4-stroke outboard engines, and two gangways on the starboard side, guaranteeing swift Zodiac operations.

The *Plancius's* specifications:

- Length: 89m/292 feet
- Breadth: 14.5m/48 feet
- Draft: 5m/16.4 feet
- Ice class: 1D
- Displacement: 3,211 tons
- Propulsion: 3x Diesel-Electric
- Average cruising speed: 10.5 knots

PRICE INCLUDES

14 nights' accommodation in cabin, all meals, coffee, tea and mineral water on board the *Plancius*; one nights' accommodation in comfortable hotel in Ushuaia on Feb 21 (double occupancy, unless cabin booked as single occupancy); breakfast and lunch on Feb 22 in Ushuaia; excursions as described in the itinerary; transfers from Ushuaia Airport to hotel in Ushuaia (regardless of arrival day) and from the ship to Ushuaia Airport or your hotel on March 8; guide services of Mark and Cheesemans' own leaders; landing fees, permits, port taxes

and passenger fees (including the IAATO (International Association of Antarctic Tour Operators) passenger fee) for all activities (unless described as optional); tips for local guides and drivers for Tierra del Fuego National Park day trip; information pack and expedition log (a beautiful colour booklet of the expedition); rubber boots while on board (rest of foul weather gear available to hire – click [here](#) for more information).

PRICE DOES NOT INCLUDE

All flights; airport and departure taxes; excess baggage fees; passport and visa fees; mandatory emergency medical and evacuation travel insurance; optional trip cancellation insurance; meals on shore not included in 'Price includes'; ship crew tips (tipping is always discretionary, of course, but we suggest budgeting about US\$10 to US\$15 per participant per day for February 22 to March 8 – about US\$150 to US\$225 total per participant); items of a personal nature such as laundry, telephone calls, medical costs or hospitalisation, room service, alcoholic and other beverages, items not on the regular menu, etc, foul weather gear (except for rubber boots) though you can rent and pick up gear in Ushuaia (click [here](#) for more information).



PAYMENT SCHEDULE PER PERSON

Deposit upon booking: US\$2,000
Second instalment of US\$4,000: due 15 Oct 2021
Third instalment of US\$4,000: due 15 May 2022
Balance due: 15 Sep 2022.

GROUP SIZE

There will be 100 passengers on the ship altogether, plus Mark and the Cheesemans' Ecology Safaris team. The ship is capable of holding 116 passengers, but we limit numbers. The charter is split 50:50 between Mark and Cheesemans' Ecology Safaris.

FLIGHTS

Flights are not included in the trip cost, of course, but we'd be very happy to help with advice on timings, airlines and routes etc. We'll be sending much more information on this nearer the time (for example, you need to leave at least four hours to transfer between the international and domestic terminals in Buenos Aires). We can also help with hotels if you choose to stay overnight in Buenos Aires or for longer in Ushuaia. Any extra overnights that you might want to arrange.

FOR PEACE OF MIND WHEN YOU BOOK

Cheesemans' Ecology Safaris is bound by a California institution called the TCRC – Travel Consumer Restitution Corporation, described here: <https://cheesemans.com/terms-and-conditions>. Under these terms their legal obligations are, in the event of them having to cancel the trip for any reason (including Covid-19) to offer an equivalent Cheesemans' Ecology Safaris trip (if that's possible) or a refund within 14 days of the date of cancellation.

CANCELLATION POLICY – IF YOU HAVE TO CANCEL

Refunds are given depending on the time left before departure according to the following table. The cancellation fee of US\$300 per person can be applied toward another Cheesemans' Ecology Safaris trip if reserved within six months of the cancelled trip's departure date. Cancellations are non-transferrable.

DATES FORFEITED

On or before July 14, 2022
July 15 to August 14, 2022
August 15 to September 14, 2022
On or after September 15, 2022

AMOUNT PER PERSON

\$300
10% of tour cost
40% of tour cost
100% of tour cost



TO BOOK, PLEASE CONTACT:

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While this is a team effort, all bookings will go through Cheesemans' Ecology Safaris - but do please contact Rachel in the first instance with any questions or if you would like to book..